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In your hand and in mine
Is the hand of lizard and bear.
And in our eyes is the eye
Of snake, hawk and wolf.
The blueprints of all beings
Overlap and share the same
Intelligent imprint of God's seal--
The double helix of DNA.
We are all of one creation.
Let not our diversity blind us
To this essential unity.

of medication, of spending great amounts of time and money doing this does not add years to anyone's lifespan. When fish die, they are replaced, and the process usually repeats itself.

Fish are probably not better off in an aquarium. In addition to disease, they are often chased, bullied, and sometimes killed by tankmates. Most fish are territorial and are especially vicious when breeding. Many fish simply cannot be kept unless they are fed a diet of live food (goldfish, live-bearing fish). At least 100 million goldfish are raised annually to be fed to other fish. One fourth of these usually die in dealers' tanks (a fate better than being eaten by a Piranha or Oscar). The problems for fish begin long before they end up in the home aquarium. Freshwater fish that are not pond or tank raised are collected by natives of various countries. They are taken to a boat, sorted into plastic bags, and shipped to holding areas until bagged again and transported by air to various wholesalers. They are then shipped to retailers and finally, if lucky, end up in the home aquarium. Great numbers of fish die before they make it to wholesalers, and many more before reaching the retailer. Hundreds of fish are packed into a single plastic bag, and many die from stress of ammonia. Fish that have a lifespan of ten to twenty years in their natural environment usually die in captivity after a few months or at best a few years. The novice can kill an astonishing number of fish before learning how to keep them alive. A local store owner writes, "I have had so many people come to the shop over the years that I like to refer to as the Saturday fish murder-

ers." These are people who hit six to seven stores on a weekend and take home twenty bags of assorted fish--all for a ten gallon tank.[3]

An article in the Wall Street Journal, "Pity the Pet Fish: It May Be Desired, but It Isn't Loved," seems to capture the attitude of many people who keep tropical fish.[4] In that article, Michael McCarthy points out that "the way fish are treated--or not treated--makes them something more like organic ornaments than pets. Dogs and cats are members of the family; fish are luxuries or hobbies." Most people do not become attached to fish nor consider fish as individual animals with emotions and unique personalities. McCarthy contends that few people care about the health of their fish. It is usually cheaper to flush them down the toilet than to medicate the aquarium. I know of no law protecting fish from this fate. People who want to get rid of fish either trade them for other fish at a local shop, flush them, throw them out in the snow, junk them in a trash can, grind them in a garbage disposal, etc. In spite of the fact that it is illegal to dump tropical fish into rivers, some people continue to do so. In a few cases this has resulted in the demise of native fish populations.

In an editorial for Tropical Fish Hobbyist, John Quinn disputes most of the views expressed in the Wall Street Journal. Quinn takes McCarthy's major premise to be that "all people who keep fishes regard them merely as casual 'throwaway' organic home decorations or artifacts that have few or no requirements and rights and thus can be disposed of when one tires of them." [5] McCarthy, however, does not say "all." I assume that he means "most" people, but it is not clear whether "most people" would include hobbyists or those not regarded as hobbyists. The dispute in this case could be settled with a definition of "hobbyist." I have not found a definition of this term in the literature. From the use of the term in aquatic magazines and texts, I would assume that a hobbyist is an experienced aquarist, a person who cares about fish and does not keep them as organic ornaments.

Gunther Sterba, author of The Aquarist's Encyclopedia, considers anyone who keeps fish a hobbyist, yet he does think it is important to distinguish a serious hobbyist from those